

**Elements of Carnival and the Carnivalesque in  
Contemporary Australian Children's Literature**

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**For Kylie and my Parents**

**My precious girls**

**and Alf and Olly – remembered with Love**

**CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP / ORIGINALITY**

I certify that the work in this thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within this text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of student

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J. Karp', is written over a horizontal line.

### **Acknowledgement**

I wish to acknowledge the support and assistance received in the writing and editing of this thesis from my supervisor Professor Rosemary Johnston.

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### **Abstract**

This thesis discusses the influence of elements of Bakhtinian carnivalesque in selected contemporary Australian children's literature. Many of the Bakhtinian ideas are centred on the work of François Rabelais, particularly his five books collectively entitled *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Aspects of the complex field of Bakhtinian carnivalesque that have been considered include: attitudes to authority, the grotesque body and its working, the importance of feasting and the associated concepts of bodily functioning, customs in relation to food, and ritual and specific language such as the use of curses and oaths. The role of humour and the manifest forms this takes within carnival are intrinsic and are discussed at some length. These central tenets are explored in two ways: first, in relation to their connection and use within the narrative structures of a selection of books short listed (and thus critically acclaimed) by the Australian Children's Book Council from the early 1980s to the early 2000s, and second, by means of contrast, to the commercially popular but generally less critically acclaimed works of other Australian writers such as Paul Jennings and Andy Griffiths. The thesis concludes by considering the ways in which carnivalesque freedom is encouraged through and by new media.

### **List of Australian Texts**

Aldridge J 1984	... ..	<i>The True Story of Lilli Stubeck</i>
Carmody I 1987	... ..	<i>Obernewtyn</i>
Fatchen M 1981	... ..	<i>Closer to the stars</i>
Fowler T 1981	... ..	<i>Wait for me! Wait for me!</i>
Gleitzman M 1991	... ..	<i>Worry Warts</i>
Griffiths A 2005	... ..	<i>Bumageddon: The Final Pongflict</i>
Griffiths A 2003	... ..	<i>Zombie Bums From Uranus</i>
Griffiths A 2001	... ..	<i>The Day My Bum Went Psycho</i>
Hartnett S 2001	... ..	<i>Forest</i>
Hartnett S 1997	... ..	<i>Princes</i>
Hartnett S 1995	... ..	<i>Sleeping Dogs</i>
Jennings P 1991	... ..	<i>Unmentionable</i>
Jennings P 1990	... ..	<i>Round the Twist</i>
Jennings P 1986	... ..	<i>Unbelievable!</i>
Kelleher V 1986	... ..	<i>Taronga</i>
Kelleher V 1982	... ..	<i>Master of the Grove</i>
Klein R 1989	... ..	<i>Came Back to Show You I Could Fly</i>
Klein R 1985	... ..	<i>Hating Alison Ashley</i>
Lurie M 1985	... ..	<i>Toby's Millions</i>
O'Neill J 1989	... ..	<i>Deepwater</i>
Park R 1980	... ..	<i>Playing Beattie Bow</i>
Phipson J 1981	... ..	<i>A Tide Flowing</i>
Rubenstein G 1986	... ..	<i>Space Demons</i>
Scott B 1984	... ..	<i>Shadows among the leaves</i>
Sharp D 1986	... ..	<i>Blue days</i>
Spence E 1982	... ..	<i>The Left Overs</i>
Vaughan Carr R 1985	... ..	<i>Firestorm</i>
Wheatley N 1984	... ..	<i>Dancing in the Anzac Deli</i>
Wrightson P 1983	... ..	<i>A Little Fear</i>
Wrightson P 1981	... ..	<i>Behind the Wind</i>